

Exeter Fire District

(December 1, 2005)

Call to Order

Chairman Peter Lacouture called the December 1st meeting of the Exeter Fire District to order at 7:08pm. Present were Commissioners Vergano, Lacouture, Wilbur, Nievera, Swanson and Reed. There were seven (7) members of the public in attendance.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Previous Month's Minutes

Ms. Vergano moved (Mr. Reed second) acceptance of the minutes of the November meeting as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

The minutes of the November 10th meeting failed to report the acceptance of the previous month's treasurer's report. It was, in fact, moved by Mr. Nievera, seconded by Mr. Wilbur and accepted unanimously.

The opening (cleared) balance for the period is \$228,838.63. Ms. Vergano reports that we have yet to receive the monthly statement from the bank hence, the figures reported this month are un-cleared. Checks and payments of \$1,554.27 leave a register balance, as of 11/08, of \$227,284.36. New transactions of \$73,314.47 (checks and payments of \$420.55 and deposits and credits of \$73,735.02) leave a register balance of \$300,598.83. Mr. Nievera moved acceptance (Mr. Reed second) of the report. The motion carried unanimously.

Communications

Mr. Nievera read the response to a letter from Mr. Woodmansee concerning a water emergency at his home last month. Mr. Woodmansee's letter, along with our response, has been forwarded to chief Franklin at Station #2.

Old Business

Ms. Vergano reported that there were three (3) new abatements to consider but that Ms. McMahon was waiting to hear from the town tax assessors' office to determine their treatment.

Chief Kettelle was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to an emergency work shift. He sent his regrets and indicated he would attend later in the evening if time allowed.

The major reason for tonight's meeting was to discuss ISO, as well as the necessary actions to be taken by the departments involved (both fire companies and the dispatch corp.). The majority of the discussion centered on the question of whether or not to invite a consultant to assist the public safety organizations with the process of lowering the ISO rating of the town. Mr. Lacouture contacted one of David Dowdy's (www.isoslayer.com) references. The department contacted had nothing but praise for Mr. Dowdy and his techniques. Mr. Wilbur offered that a consultant would offer the best chance for a successful outcome to the audit. Mr. Reed reported that his research with local sources offered little more than we already knew.

Ms. Vergano stated she had reviewed the "book" that Mr. Dowdy had placed on his web site and noted that there was a great deal of information contained in the first ten or twenty pages and that it should be read by all board members. She also reported that her contact with ISO was of little help. ISO neither endorses nor recommends the use of consultants.

Mr. Nievera contacted Chief Stanley from Hope Valley and reported that he had access to the Chief's ISO files. He further stated that the information appeared to be more helpful to the organizations with the actual audit rather than assisting with the question of a consultant. Chief Franklin stated that he has spoken with Chief Stanley at length concerning ISO.

Mr. Davis (Pres. Exeter #1) and Chief Franklin both expressed their concern regarding the cost and payment of fees to cover a consultant. Neither company can afford the payments at this time. Mr. Davis suggests asking a consultant to let us know what kind of information is needed prior to his visit. He also asked if Chief Stanley could be of any assistance. Chief Jordan doubts that Chief Stanley would be available considering his commitments. Chief Franklin senses the need to make some hard choices towards the end of this fiscal year if collections continue at the current rate. Chief Franklin further stated that all new purchases are made with ISO in mind. He also stated that he has compiled some of the information needed by ISO; it simply is not in the format required by ISO. Ms. Vergano expressed her concern and frustration that “We are where we were twelve months ago”. Mr. Nievera asked Chief Franklin how long it would take to put the information into an (ISO) acceptable format. Chief Franklin feels he does not need a great deal of time, he finds himself playing “catch-up”. “I can’t spend money now that I may need for something more important later in the year”. Chief Franklin offered that ISO is a priority for his station. Mr. Jordan offered that a target date a year from now would most likely result in a more advantageous rating. “The likelihood of being surprised by ISO in the near future is next to nil since they are understaffed and busy” offered Mr. Jordan. Jordan also asked who would do the preparatory work for ISO with the volunteers being worked as hard as they are. Mr. Swanson thinks we should “pick some more brains” to become familiar with how others approached their rating.

Mr. Nievera stated that he fields questions on ISO on a weekly basis and that he has no answers for those asking the questions. Ms. Vergano asked if the two sides of town could be rated separately. Chief Franklin suggested that splitting the town would only lead to problems in the future. Mr. Davis thinks that Station #1 will be ready for an ISO audit about this time next year.

Ms. Vergano and Mr. Nievera asked Mr. Lacouture to contact Mr. Dowdy with the goal of obtaining a list of what is needed prior to the consultant's arrival. Mr. Lacouture will comply and report back to the body.

Mr. Lacouture inquired as to the roll of the Rescue Corps in an ISO audit. Mr. Gardner (Rescue Corps training officer) stated there was none, other than the fact that the paid rescue personnel act as firefighters (when possible) on fire events.

There followed a short discussion on the responsibility for paying the consultant. Some were in favor of the fire companies absorbing the cost and some thought the funds should come from the district budget. Mr. Nievera pointed out that the money all comes from the same place – the taxpayers. Mr. Gardner reminded all that the board would be less likely to spend the funds on anything other than an ISO consultant whereas the fire companies could be placed in the position whereby the funds could be used for an operational issue.

The sense of the meeting was that keeping the responsibility of the funds with the board was more responsible. Mr. Wilbur offered the fact that it would be good public relations to have the funds in the district budget rather than that of the fire companies.

New Business

There was no new business discussed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on January 12, 2006 (@7:00pm) at the Exeter Public Library.

Executive Session

Mr. Wilbur moved (Ms. Vergano second) entering into executive session in accordance with RIGL (§ 42-46-5(a)(2)). The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Lacouture announced that he had retained Mr. Robert Brooks of Adler, Pollack & Sheehan to represent the fire district in the pending labor relations case filed by the IAFF.

Adjournment

Ms. Vergano moved (Mr. Reed second) adjournment at 9:09. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Nievera, Clerk

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